

Orphans

by Dex

Category: X-Men

Language: English

Status: In-Progress

Published: 1999-03-09 09:00:00

Updated: 1999-03-09 09:00:00

Packaged: 2016-04-27 11:56:22

Rating: K

Chapters: 1

Words: 3,027

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Jubilee discovers the man behind the visor as Scott comes to her aid.

Orphans

"Orphans"

>

All recognizable characters and settings belong to Marvel; I am using them without permission but mean no harm and am making no profit. The plot and original characters, however belong to me. Any and all feedback is appreciated at dex@globalserve.net. Redistribution of this tale for profit is illegal. Please do not archive this story without contacting me first to obtain my permission.

>

>

" Humph! "

Jubilee snorted as she slid down the wall, a computer screen listing a score in front of her. With a muffled curse, she lashed out with her powers, hitting the screen with a burst of explosive plasma energy. Normally Jubilee's powers were virtually harmless flashes of light and colour, however she has long possessed the ability to generate more destructive attacks. The explosion of the screen was an indication of that capability. In the fading tendrils of electrical smoke she sat, walled up against the world.

>

* * *

>

" Strange..." Cyclops looked up from the console and checked the blinking light. The indicator referred to actual damage to the Danger Room itself, rather than the holograms. With Remy's injury and Logan's disappearance, Scott hadn't expected to see it go off again for a while. With a touch, he checked the records of the Danger Room,

looking for the occupant. His brow knitted in puzzlement. Of all of the possibilities, Jubilee would have been his last suspect. The youngest X-Men, soon to be a student of the new school was never really a destructive member of the team, usually winning through confusion and glib boasts. With a sigh, Cyclops left the control center for the Danger Room. If Jubilee was breaking things, it would at least be worth it to find out why.

>

* * *

>

new participant requests access The computer voice chimed.

" Fer'get it!"

override utilized Jubilee looked up in shock. Only three people had the override for the Danger Room, and any of them meant she was in real trouble. She got hurriedly to her feet as Cyclops walked in. Her anxiety level jumped up several notches at his appearance. The Prof was a grandfather type, and Stormy and Wolvie were close, so she felt comfortable with both, but Cyclops was still a big unknown to her. She always pictured him in his outfit, grim and barking orders to people.

" Jubilee?" Scott said as he stepped into the room, immediately noting the destroyed monitor. At least he wasn't in uniform, thought Jubilee as she frantically searched for an excuse.

" Ah, jus' doin' the practice thing. Keeping my edge and stuff, ya know." Jubilee stammered. Scott bent down to peer at the shattered metal, running two fingers along the surface.

" Focused plasma explosion." He said, rubbing the slight film left behind between his fingers. " Haven't seen traces since Boom-Boom was with us on Ship. When do you begin training against computer screens?"

" Ur, well...." Jubilee muttered, blushing and staring at her feet. Now she was going to get it. " Well, I kinda got mad..."

" About what?" Scott wiped his fingers against his shirt. Jubilee watched the absentminded gesture with a certain amount of surprise.

" Nuthin'. You wouldn't understand... besides, it's kinda stupid any ways. Sorry 'bout the room."

" This is about Logan leaving, right?"

" Maybe."

" I think more then maybe." Said Scott, sitting down against the wall.

" It's not really important. Look, I'll get outta yer hair." Jubilee started for the door.

" Have a seat?" Scott motioned to the space beside him. Jubilee looked slightly shocked for a moment before shrugging and taking a

seat.

" Sure."

" So, you're feeling rejected and betrayed because Logan had to leave."

" Wha..?" Jubilee gaped, for once speechless. Scott went on.

" And you understand why he had to, and that makes you feel even worse because you think you're being selfish and unfeeling to him." Jubilee stared at him in open shock.

" How did you...?"

" You aren't the only orphan to find a home with the X-Men. I was the first, remember."

" Yeah, but..."

" And I remember what it feels like for someone you care for to leave."

" You..."

" You knew that I was an orphan."

" Yeah, but I kinda assumed that.. Well, being you and all that...ur..."

" That I could handle it and nothing really bothers me. Right?"

" Yup." Jubilee looked slightly embarrassed.

" Common misconception. When you're sixteen years old with no family, no friends and nothing that you can really call your own, you find that handling it is your only real option. And, I had a mutant power which I couldn't control to live with. It still hurts though. A lot sometimes." Scott gave that rare crooked smile of his, nervously rubbing the back of his head.

" So you still feel... I don't know, helpless sometimes?" Said Jubilee, trying to vocalize how she felt.

" Sometimes. Every time we leave the mansion, the possibility exists that someone might not come back. As the leader, it's my responsibility if they don't make it home. Every choice I have to make could get someone killed. Some one I care for."

" So that's why..."

" I seem a little anal-retentive?"

" To put it lightly."

" Thanks. I know that Remy and Logan and Betsy seem more... heroic because they throw caution to the wind and leap into the fray with a joke and a yell. But I have the lives of the entire team in my hands. If I toss away concerns about a situation and charge in, one day I will lead the whole team into a deathtrap." Cyclops pointed out,

trying to put words to his responsibilities.

" Bummer."

" Tell me about it."

" So why dontcha step down?"

" Because it is part of who I am. When I was first appointed the deputy leader by Charles, years ago, I tried to give it up to the other X-Men. I was convinced that they were better suited for the job, and that I would only mess things up."

" Wow." Jubilee looked surprised at the idea of the supposedly self-confident Scott Summers unsure about leading the X-Men.

" However, Charles convinced me that I was the one with the ability to lead the team. Because I cared for the team at such a deep level, I was the one able to make the snap decisions which could save or damn the people who counted on me. That I would preserve the team even if I was forced to sacrifice someone on it."

" Sacrifice?"

" Every leader ends up in a situation where he has to choose between the life of a teammate and the lives of the rest of the team. It is the hardest choice anyone ever has to make. If you can't be trusted to make that decision, then you are endangering the lives of everyone on the team." Scott stared down at his hands for a minute, choosing his words carefully.

" Charles knew that if I had to, I would make the decision. Fortunately, I haven't been forced to do that yet, and I hope I never do. "

" Man, and I thought that leading was just shouting orders and yelling at Gumbo."

" Well, that is part of it." Scott smiled, " And yelling at Gambit falls under the perks section. But it is a hard job, and it takes all of your attention. After Maddie and I had Chris, I had to make a decision about the X-Men, whether to give up the position as leader or to try to continue with Magneto in charge. It was too much, and it took a stupid challenge with Storm to force me to make the right choice."

" I thought it was 'cause Storm kicked yer butt."

" That too."

" I never really thought about it that way." Jubilee chewed her bottom lip for a moment, absorbing the information.

" Few do. That's why Logan had to leave. Because he has lost that focus."

" I don't follow."

" Logan has been fighting something inside him for longer than any of us have been alive. Without the focus he's learned to help him, he's

afraid that one day he'll completely lose control and hurt someone he cares about; Jean, Storm, or you. He cares too much to take that risk. "

" He didn't want to go?"

" Do you think he would?"

" Well, I thought that maybe I... I don't know." Jubilee looked slightly pained.

" You think that you had something to do with his needing to leave?" Jubilee nodded sadly.

" Sorta."

" You're right, in a sense. Logan had to leave because he didn't want you to see him lose control. You mean more to him than almost any one on the planet, and he's afraid of the possibility that he might harm the relationship you share."

" Are you sure?" Jubilee blushed shyly.

" Well, I can't see any other reason. Logan and I are like mirror images of each other, and we have a strange bond because of it. Like any thing, people like us need a balance and they instinctively understand elements of their counterpoint." Scott smiled, musing at the past.

" I remember our first meeting in the front hallway. He was smoking one of those foul cigars and leaning in the open doorway. I'd been asked by the Professor to bring him to the Danger Room, and I called him from the other end of the hall. He ignored me, continuing to stare out the door. I was pretty impatient at this point, with all of my friends trapped on an island and depending on people like Logan to save them. I grabbed him to pull him along and nearly lost my hand to those damn claws of his. He and I stood facing each other for what seemed like hours till Charles called us telepathically. The runt tossed his cigar at my feet and wandered in with a grin on his face, saying, so you think yer the boss o' Logan, huh kid? Don't get any grand ideas." Scott said, his voice a gruff imitation of Wolverine's.

" Oh man." Jubilee laughed. " Sounds like Wolvie. What happened?"

" We kept from killing each other... barely, and eventually won the respect of the other. Respect from Logan is something special, Jubilee, and I take it very seriously." Scott smiled again. " And I know that he respects you as well as cares for you. That's something special."

" Yeah. Yeah, I guess it is." Jubilee smiled back at him.

" You should talk to Kitty sometime. She was much like you are now; the youngest X-Man, Logan's adopted daughter in a way."

" He seems to make a habit of it." Jubilee mused.

" Someone like Logan needs a person to believe in him, and trust him. Most adults are distrustful of him because of his secrets and manner,

but younger people seem to ignore that and see the person within. It's remarkable in a way." Scott propped his chin up against the palm of his hand.

" Well, Wolvie jus' wants people to see him for who he is, not what he was. That, I do know." Jubilee laughed shyly. " Wow, is this weird."

" What's that?"

" I'm talking to you like yer a real person."

" Thanks." Scott commented dryly.

" It's not that I don't think yer human, but yer always sorta... distant."

" Part of who I am. The closer I get to people, the more afraid I am that something will happen to them. Keeping a distance helps me cope."

" It's not the best plan, eh."

" Tell me about it."

" Ya gotta be savvy and such. You know, do the talk show host thing. Find out Rogue's favorite ice-cream, or Hankster's favorite movie, or Bishop's current drink obsession." Jubilee prompted.

" Almond Mocha, Barefoot in the Park, and Dr.Pepper." Jubilee's jaw dropped. " I do watch for these things, I'm just not comfortable with... opening up."

" It's part of being human, boss."

" Hmm..." Scott gave Jubilee a strange look and then got to his feet. Jubilee scrambled up beside him. " Care to join me for a quick walk, Jubilee?"

" Uh, okay." Agreed Jubilee, somewhat apprehensively.

" Good." Jubilee followed Scott out of the Danger Room and into the main house, through to the older wing in which the offices of Professor Xaiver were held. Scott unlocked a door at the end of the hall, and opened it into a room which Jubilee had never seen before.

" What's this?"

" My old room. When I first came here, the wings hadn't been remodeled yet, so I was put down here. Later, Charles gave it to me as my office, when he first appointed me leader of the X-Men. I use it as a place to think and reflect." Jubilee followed him into the room, looking about curiously. A large desk and set of bookshelves dominated the room, books and papers scattered across the area. This was another shock for the young mutant. She had always pegged Scott as the neat-freak, but the stacks of books and other clutter were testimony against it. Another new facet of the enigmatic leader of the X-Men.

" Wow." Jubilee said, picking up a book. " This is the secret lair of the evil Cyclops."

" Yup. Igor is on vacation." Scott began rummaging through the desk drawers, searching for something.

" Uh, Cyke?" Jubilee said tentatively.

" It's Scott, Jubilee."

" Uh, okay. Scott?"

" Hmm?"

" Do you think that...well, do you think that Logan is... proud of me?" She said, the words coming slow and awkwardly. Scott picked out a box from the drawer and straightened up, looking into the mirror on the wall for a moment before turning to Jubilee.

" Remember what I told you about Logan and I being like mirror images of each other?"

" Yup."

" Well, I'm proud of you, Jubilee. I've seen you handle situations which I can't imagine dealing with at your age, and through all of it, you haven't lost the laughter and joy which makes you special. As for Logan, I can't see him seeing it any other way." Scott said, the words coming from a spot deep within him. Jubilee stood in astonishment for a moment before regaining the power of speech.

" Gosh..."

" Anyhow," Scott said, trying to cover his sudden embarrassment. " Here." He handed the small box to Jubilee. Curiously, she opened the box, revealing a watch inside. The watch was simply designed, but well made. A gold X filled the watch face, with the rest of the watch made in steel. An old leather band lay beside it, and a soft ticking emanated from the timepiece.

" Charles gave that to me when I turned seventeen. It was the first birthday present I had received since I was too young to remember." Scott said, his voice distant as he brought up the memories.

" Charles had ordered a cake, and even put up a few decorations, which was a major effort, being pre-Sh'iar technology in the mansion. It was that day that he told me about the X-Man, and his dreams for humans and mutants."

" So, that was the first X-type meeting."

" Right. I was a lonely, scared orphan who had just found a home. He talked about his dream of humans and mutants living together to me. At the time, don't understand what he really meant. I remember trying on the uniform and visor, and thinking about what he really had planned for me."

" And look at you now." Joked Jubilee. Scott sat down at the desk and locked eye to eye with her.

" Jubilee, when you first helped Logan, did you think about where it might take you?"

" Uh... I don't think so. I just remember watching these guys beat this other guy until he looked so hurt that he must be dead. An' then, they beat him some more. I jus' couldn't let them keep doing it, so I helped him." Jubilee bit her lip as she relived the horrid episode in Australia.

" And when I first put on that uniform, my only thought was that I might be able to help someone like me. Someone who was scared and lost and needed something to believe in. That watch represents why we struggle. Because, somewhere outside is a person who is just like we were, and needs someone like Scott Summers or Jubilation Lee to show them something to believe in." Cyclops said.

" Look, I can't..." Jubilee said, trying to hand back the watch. Scott closed her hand over it.

" You can, because it has done what it was meant to do for me. I have a family, friends, and a woman who loves me without any barriers. I can't pretend that I am as close to you as Logan, or ever will be, but I want you to have it. I hope it will mean to you what it means to me." Scott and Jubilee met eye to eye, with Jubilee finally pocketing the watch.

" It doesn't sound like enough Boss, but thanks."

" Don't mention it. Besides, any future leader of the X-Men needs something tangible to represent the dream."

" Future leader? Heh, I think you just cracked a joke, Scott. Later!" Jubilee said, flashing her irrepressible smile and leaving with a wave. Down the hall, the sound of laughter could be heard as she tackled a stunned Beast. Scott smiled and watched her go. After a while he sat back down and made a few quick notes on a pad.

" Leader. Orphan. Least sure of herself then anyone else. Who does this sound like?" The words took shape in Scott's precise angular writing. Leaning back in his chair, he studied the words he had written, muttering to himself.

" Who does this sound like?" A soft chuckle underscored the words. " Who, indeed."
>

FIN

End
file.